

ITEM#: 20
DATE: 01-26-21

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR CYRIDE BATTERY-ELECTRIC BUSES AND CHARGING EQUIPMENT

BACKGROUND:

In July 2019, CyRide was awarded nearly \$1.66 million in federal funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) from the Low or No Emission (Lo-No) Grants Program to utilize toward the purchase of battery-electric buses (BEBs) and necessary infrastructure. In August 2020, CyRide was also awarded \$390,000 from Iowa's Volkswagen (VW) Settlement grant funding to help offset the local cost of this project. Due to higher than expected pricing, at the October 2020 meeting the Transit Board of Trustees allocated an additional \$138,000 for the two BEBs. Current funding levels in the Capital Improvement Plan are as follows.

Item	Lo-No Grant	VW Grant	Local Share	Estimated Total Cost
Depot Charging Station and Dispensers	\$85,000	\$20,000	\$35,000	\$140,000
Two 40' Electric Buses	\$1,240,000	\$370,000	\$138,000	\$1,748,000
Total Cost	\$1,325,000	\$390,000	\$173,000	\$1,888,000

Since receiving the award CyRide has been working with the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) to develop specification requirements for the two BEBs.

After reviewing procurement options and securing authorization from the Iowa DOT, CyRide plans to utilize the Commonwealth of Virginia's statewide bus contract to purchase the BEBs. The Lo-No program allows a grantee to purchase rolling stock and related equipment from any state's cooperative procurement contract or schedule. Virginia's contract includes language that allows other FTA funding recipients in or outside the state of Virginia to purchase vehicles using the agreement.

This approach allows CyRide to evaluate multiple original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and enter into a purchase agreement with the OEM determined to be the best fit for the agency. Using a statewide contract also enables CyRide to purchase vehicles at a lower cost than would be expected if an independent request for proposal were to be issued.

Working with CTE, CyRide developed evaluation criteria for the OEMs on the Virginia contract. Based upon the evaluation criteria CyRide identified New Flyer of America, Inc, of St. Cloud, Minnesota, and NOVA Bus, of Plattsburgh, New York, as the two top OEMs

that met CyRide’s requirements. After presentations and reference checks, these OEMs were scored as follows:

Criteria	Weight	NOVA	New Flyer
Experience	15%	1.087	1.275
Operational Impact	5%	0.400	0.300
Range of Operation	15%	1.350	1.050
Serviceability	10%	0.850	0.750
Delivery Schedule	10%	0.900	0.925
References	10%	0.800	0.775
Price	35%	3.500	3.460
Total Score		8.887	8.535

Based on the evaluation criteria, CyRide determined the vehicles manufactured by NOVA Bus of Plattsburgh, New York, would be the best selection for CyRide.

Heavy-duty bus specifications are not finalized until approximately 6 months before delivery; therefore, final pricing has not been established. The current pricing provided by NOVA Bus is \$842,178 per vehicle for a total cost of \$1,684,356. Specifications will focus on maximizing range and standardizing the buses to CyRide’s current fleet. Due to Iowa’s cold climate, these buses are planned to be equipped with diesel auxiliary heaters to supplement the vehicle’s standard electric heaters. If CyRide would rely only on electric heat, the effective range of the buses will be greatly reduced. Auxiliary heaters will be automated to ensure that the heaters are only operated when strictly necessary. Delivery of the buses will be approximately 12 to 18 months after a purchase order is issued.

CyRide will also work with CTE and NOVA Bus to purchase appropriate charging equipment. Given the large variability in charging requirements between agencies, the Virginia contract allows coordination with OEMs to determine specific charging needs and supply pricing for equipment. CyRide believes this approach is the correct procurement solution to ensure proper operation of the charging equipment and avoid delays once the vehicles are delivered. CyRide has \$140,000 budgeted for charging equipment.

The Transit Board of Trustees approved award of the contract to NOVA Bus at its January 15, 2020 meeting.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the award of contract for two battery-electric buses and associated charging equipment to NOVA Bus of Plattsburgh, New York for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$1,888,000.
2. Do not approve the contract award and direct staff to proceed according to City Council priorities.

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approval of this contract would allow CyRide to purchase battery-electric buses and their associated charging equipment. This would be a major step toward more environmentally sustainable transportation options in Ames.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as noted above.